

Public Notice – Environmental Project

PURPOSE OF NOTICE:

The Department of Environmental Quality seeks public comment on the state's response to the environmental aspects of a proposed project in Virginia coastal waters.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

July 21, 2009 to August 13, 2009

TYPE OF RESPONSE:

Federal Consistency Determination

DEQ is reviewing a proposed federal fisheries management action to determine if it is consistent with the U.S. Coastal Zone Management Act. The act seeks to protect the quality of air, water or other natural resources in Virginia's coastal area.

NAME OF AGENCY PROPOSING THE PROJECT:

DOC/NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The National Marine Fisheries Service proposes Amendment 10 to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The two purposes of Amendment 10 are to: (1) develop a rebuilding program that allows the butterfish stock to rebuild in the shortest amount of time possible (but not to exceed ten years) and permanently protects the long-term health and stability of the rebuilt stock; and (2) generally minimize bycatch and the fishing mortality of unavoidable bycatch, to the extent practicable, in the squid, Atlantic mackerel, and butterfish (SMB) fisheries. Proposed management actions include: Measure 1-develop a butterfish mortality cap program for the *Loligo* fishery or institute a 3 inch minimum codend mesh requirement to allow the butterfish stock to rebuild to B_{MSY} and protect the long-term health and stability of the rebuilt stock; Measure 2-increase *Loligo* minimum codend mesh size to reduce discards of butterfish and other non-target fish; Measure 3-eliminate some exemptions for *Illex* vessels from *Loligo* minimum codend mesh requirements to reduce discards of butterfish and other fish; and Measure 4-establish seasonal gear restricted areas (GRAs) to reduce the discarding of butterfish and other non-target fish. The federal consistency determination submitted by NMFS for the amendment finds the proposed action consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of the Virginia Coastal Resources Management Program (also called the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program).

HOW TO COMMENT:

DEQ accepts comments from the public by e-mail, fax or postal mail. All comments must include the name, address and telephone number of the person commenting and be received by DEQ within the comment period. The public may review the project documents at DEQ's central office in Richmond.

CONTACT FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS, DOCUMENT REQUESTS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

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